

## CLAIMS

1. A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network, the method comprising the steps of:  
connecting the network to a central device performing administration of the  
5 node numbers available for the network;  
transmitting a request message to the central device;  
ascertaining a free node number from available node numbers via the central  
device; and  
transmitting and assigning the ascertained node number to a network node.

10 2. A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the request message is transmitted from a network node which has not yet been assigned a node number to the central device if the network node is being newly registered on the network.

15 3. A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 2, the method further comprising the steps of:  
administering node-specific data locally by the network node if the central  
device is not active at an instant at which the network node is registered; and  
20 bringing into line and updating the locally administered data when the central device has been activated.

25 4. A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the request message is transmitted to the central device if a change needs to be made for the already assigned node number.

5. A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 4, wherein a newly assigned node number is accepted by a network node only if the central device is authorized to assign node number.

6. A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the request message is transmitted from a network node to the central device if the network node previously has received a polling message from the central device, and the node has not yet been assigned a node number.

7. A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 6, the method further comprising the step of:  
10 transmitting node-specific information from the network node to the central device within the context of the polling message.

8. A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 1, wherein at least one of the request message and the polling message are transmitted via a temporary signaling connection within the network.

9. A system for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network, comprising:  
a central device for administering the node number available for the  
20 network; and  
a local communication unit at at least one of the network nodes for communicating with the central device, the local communication unit able to assign a free node number ascertained by the central device within the context of a request message to a network node.

25 10. A system for assigning node number to network nodes and a network as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the central device is connected to one of the network nodes in the network via a local area network.